Claims

1. A real-time inventory [management] status and information system comprising:

    a database, for storing on-hand, reserved, and ordered inventory information;

    a communication interface, for providing access to said database, said interface communicating between a server and [a client] said database;

    a server, for providing real-time access to system accessible data, and for performing business logic on such data; and,

    a client, for providing a user interface to the system.

2. The real-time inventory [management] status and information system of Claim 1, in which said server is comprised of a web server.

3. The real-time inventory [management] status and information system of Claim 1, in which said client is comprised of a web browser.

4. The real-time inventory [management] status and information system of Claim 1, further comprising a means of wireless communications between a client and a server.

5. The real-time inventory [management] status and information system of Claim 1, in which said client is comprised of a combination of a web browser and custom software for real-time inventory display.

6. The real-time inventory [management] status and information system of Claim 1, in which said client is comprised of a combination of a web browser and custom software for real-time inventory monitoring.

7. The real-time inventory [management] status and information system of Claim 1, in which said client is comprised of a combination of a web browser and custom software for real-time inventory control.

8. The real-time inventory [management] status and information system of Claim 1, in which said client is comprised of a combination of a web browser and custom software for real-time inventory display, monitoring, and control.

9. The real-time inventory [management] status and information system of Claim 1, in which said client includes a device capable of reading container labels.

10. The real-time inventory [management] status and information system of Claim 1, in which said client includes a barcode scanner.

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11. The real-time inventory [management] <u>status and information</u> system of Claim 1, in which said client periodically receives or requests inventory updates from said server.

12. A method of real-time inventory [management] <u>status and information dissemination</u>, comprising the steps of:

recording orders and order properties, including quantities ordered, date ordered, anticipated delivery time, and anticipated delivery date in an inventory database;

recording any new or returned inventory arrivals, and incrementing corresponding on-hand inventory entries;

receiving purchase requests and placing corresponding inventory on reserve;

calculating inventory quantities available for delivery as a difference between quantity on-hand and quantity on reserve.

decrementing both reserve and inventory totals upon shipment; and

providing user-appropriate inventory information when requested.

13. The real-time inventory [management] <u>status and information dissemination</u> method of Claim 12, in which said new inventory orders are entered through an accounting system.

14. The real-time inventory [management] <u>status and information dissemination</u> method of Claim 13, wherein said accounting system automatically updates an inventory database.

15. The real-time inventory [management] <u>status and information dissemination</u> method of Claim 12, in which electronically readable codes corresponding to inventory items are read by a client as items are received or shipped.

16. The real-time inventory [management] <u>status and information dissemination</u> method of Claim 15, in which said electronically readable codes are Universal Product Code (UPC) codes.

17. The real-time inventory [management] <u>status and information dissemination</u> method of Claim 12, in which said user-appropriate inventory information is displayed on a client.

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